

UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION  
GREEN SECTION  
Southwestern Office

Texas A & M College

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

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This is your first issue of the Southwestern Turfletter. We trust that you will find it of interest and that you will come to look forward to its regular appearance.

WHAT IS THE SOUTHWESTERN TURFLETTER ?

The Southwestern Turfletter is designed to keep you up to date on turf matters in the Southwest. It will be published six times a year and it will be mailed to superintendents and green committee chairmen of golf clubs in the Southwest who subscribe to the Regional Turf Service offered by the USGA Green Section. The Turfletter will deal with turf matters with which clubs in the Southwest directly are concerned. It will supplement the turf information published regularly in the USGA Journal and Turf Management.

REGIONAL TURF SERVICE

The February, 1953, issue of the USGA Journal and Turf Management contained an article by Mr. Richard S. Tufts which outlined a plan whereby the USGA might be able better to serve its member clubs. The establishment of the Southwestern Office of the Green Section is a part of that plan.

The purpose of this office is to serve effectively the USGA member clubs in the Southwest. Service will be in the form of individual visits, group meetings, correspondence, telephone contacts, and through publications such as this, your first Turfletter.

Many of our readers attended one or more of the series of meetings held in July for the purpose of introducing the Regional Turf Service. Those who may have questions regarding some phase of this plan for service are invited to write. Any suggestions concerning ways to improve the service will be appreciated.

NEW BERMUDAS

Several improved strains of Bermudagrass are available for use on putting greens in the Southwest. Most of these new Bermudas are fine-leaved strains. Among them are Gene Tift, which was developed in Florida; Tiffine (Tifton 127), from the Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station; Cynodon Magennisii, a species imported from South Africa; and T-35A, a selection being tested at Texas A. & M. College. All these

Bermudagrasses probably are hybrids between African Bermuda and the common Bermudagrass that we find growing throughout the South. These grasses approach creeping bent in texture and they produce superior putting surfaces because of their fine leaves. All of them grow quite rapidly and some have been observed to have a tendency to form a rather dense mat. When the mat or thatch is kept down by close mowing the grasses may show a poor color during the heat of summer. If the brush or rake is not kept on the mower, the thatch may build up quite rapidly to the point where the greens become spongy. A great deal of study is needed to determine the correct management of these grasses. It is believed that when proper methods of management are found they will provide truly superior turf.

#### BENT INSTEAD OF RYEGRASS FOR WINTER GREENS

Ryegrass has never been completely satisfactory for winter putting greens in the South. While ryegrass makes excellent putting greens when it is properly managed, there is always a problem at the time of transition from ryegrass to Bermudagrass in the spring. There is also frequently a problem of getting ryegrass established in the fall. "Damping off" organisms are the cause of many failures to obtain adequate stands of ryegrass.

Some golf courses in the Southwest are turning to bent for winter greens instead of ryegrass. A much smaller amount of seed is used when bent replaces rye. Whereas ryegrass is ordinarily seeded at the rate of approximately 25 pounds of seed to a thousand square feet, a good stand of bentgrass can be obtained with as little as three to five pounds of seed to a thousand square feet.

In North and West Texas and in parts of New Mexico some Bermudagrass greens are being converted to bentgrass by the over-seeding of bentgrass for winter use. It has been found in many cases that bent does not disappear in the early summer as it ordinarily would be expected to do and it may persist throughout the summer. Where conditions are such that bent can be encouraged to live throughout the summer, it has sometimes replaced Bermudagrass within a period of two or three years. For these two or three years it is necessary to reseed each fall with bentgrass to thicken up the stand and to provide a uniform putting surface throughout the winter months.

There is relatively little difference in cost of bentgrass and of ryegrass for winter greens. If the bent persists through the summer and the superintendent is able to convert his greens to bent instead of Bermudagrass, he has gained an additional dividend.

#### FERTILIZER VS FURROWS

On golf courses in West Texas and New Mexico it is a common practice to plow shallow furrows along the edges of the fairways. These furrows have as their purpose the delineation of the fairway area. Many of these golf courses play winter rules. It is necessary to improve the lie of the ball because of the fact the turf is poor and many unfavorable lies are found on these fairways. The delineating furrows are a source of disagreement, especially when they begin to fill up so that it isn't exactly clear just where the furrow should be.

Would it not be better to fertilize the fairways enough so that the Bermudagrass would furnish good lies and so that it would not be necessary to play winter rules? If the ball were played as it lies rather than being improved there would be no need for trying to delineate the fairway in this fashion. When turf is vigorous and dense the mower will delineate the fairway without difficulty. The tall growing grass in the rough will form a rather sharp line where it coincides with the closely mowed grass on the fairway.

#### TURF CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

October 21-23: Fourth Annual Central Plains Turf Foundation Turf Conference, Manhattan, Kansas. Dr. William F. Pickett of the Kansas State College is in charge of turf investigations. Inquiries about the conference should be addressed to Dr. Pickett or to Mr. L. E. Lambert, 7241 The Paseo, Kansas City, 5, Missouri. Mr. Lambert is Chairman of the Program Committee.

November 30 - December 1 and 2: Oklahoma Annual Turf Conference. This conference will be held in the Student Union Building on the campus of the Oklahoma A. & M. College at Stillwater, Oklahoma. Address inquiries to Mr. Bob Dunning, Box 4236, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Bob is Chairman of the Program Committee for this conference. A number of well-known authorities on turf matters have accepted invitations to appear on the program. It promises to be a good one.

January 3-9, 1954: 25th Annual Turf Conference and Show, Golf Course Superintendents' Association of America, Municipal Auditorium, Miami, Florida. Agar M. Brown, Secretary.

January 18-20, 1954: The Eighth Annual Texas Turf Conference, Memorial Student Center, Texas A. & M. College, College Station, Texas. Marvin H. Ferguson, Program Chairman.

The Texas Turf Association which sponsors this conference has chosen "Water" as its central theme this year. No other subject seems so worthy of thorough exploration. Certainly, a knowledge of water requirements of turf and correct water use would allow most turf growers to do a better job.

#### Note to Chairmen of Green Committees:

Many clubs insist that their superintendents attend turf conferences and other educational events. Many chairmen go along with their superintendents and both of them get some new ideas. Why not ask your Board of Directors to pay your superintendent's expenses to at least one turf conference this year? The superintendent's increased knowledge and new ideas will enable him to do a better job for YOU.

# **Southwestern Turfletter**

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